

Brownfields Assessment Demonstration Pilot

Fort Myers, FL

Outreach and Special Projects Staff (5101)

Quick Reference Fact Sheet

EPA's Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative is designed to empower States, communities, and other stakeholders in economic redevelopment to work together in a timely manner to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields. A brownfield is a site, or portion thereof, that has actual or perceived contamination and an active potential for redevelopment or reuse. Since 1995, EPA has funded more than 200 Brownfields Assessment Demonstration Pilots, at up to \$200,000 each, to support creative two-year explorations and demonstrations of brownfields solutions. The Pilots are intended to provide EPA, States, Tribes, municipalities, and communities with useful information and strategies as they continue to seek new methods to promote a unified approach to site assessment, environmental cleanup, and redevelopment.

BACKGROUND

EPA has selected the City of Fort Myers for a Brownfields Pilot. Historically, the city (population 46,522) has been the population, government, business, and financial center of Lee County. Fort Myers' earliest industries revolved around coastal shipping and cattle and produce distribution. There are an estimated 440 potential brownfields sites in the city that are found in several commercial and industrial areas; these properties have not been redeveloped due to environmental liability concerns. The city is in the process of designating these areas as community redevelopment districts. The poverty rate for the city, 20.7 percent, is more than double the and regional average. The unemployment rate has been estimated to be more than 50 percent higher than that of the rest of the county.

The Pilot will target five areas in the city that contain the highest concentrations of brownfields (Dunbar, Downtown and Central Fort Myers, the U.S. 41 Corridor, the Fowler/Evans Corridor, and the Palm Beach Corridor). At least half of the Pilot activities will be focused on the Dunbar area, which is home to a large segment of the city's African American population and is characterized by junkyards, recycling centers, auto repair shops, and abandoned gas stations. The Dunbar area is located in a state Enterprise Zone.

PILOT SNAPSHOT



Fort Myers, Florida

Date of Announcement:
March 1999

Amount: \$169,000

Profile: The Pilot targets five neighborhoods, with special emphasis on the Dunbar area.

Contacts:

City of Fort Myers
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Regional Brownfields Team
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Visit the EPA Region 4 Brownfields web site at:
<http://www.epa.gov/region4/wastepgs/brownfpgs/bf.htm>

For further information, including specific Pilot contacts, additional Pilot information, brownfields news and events, and publications and links, visit the EPA Brownfields web site at:
<http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/>

OBJECTIVES

Fort Myers' objective is to eliminate the brownfields impediments in the city's designated and proposed community redevelopment districts, directing the majority of time and effort toward the Dunbar community. The city hopes to stem the tide of urban decay and blight which has resulted in job loss, deterioration of physical structures, and continued environmental degradation. To help accomplish these objectives, the city will hire a brownfields coordinator who will complement existing city planning efforts by focusing on environmental issues related to cleanup and redevelopment.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Activities planned as part of this Pilot include:

- Reviewing and creating an inventory of historical data for the targeted areas;
- Identifying and analyzing a minimum of five sites in each of the five target areas and prioritizing these sites based on redevelopment potential;
- Performing Phase I environmental assessments on the prioritized sites, and performing at least ten Phase II environmental assessments, five of which will be in the Dunbar area and five in the other four areas; and
- Implementing a community involvement program to ensure that affected neighborhoods participate in the planning processes associated with brownfields target areas.

The cooperative agreement for this Pilot has not yet been negotiated; therefore, activities described in this fact sheet are subject to change.